

**THE BIPARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL TASKFORCE ON ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE**  
**Co-chairs: Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-MA) Rep. Christopher Smith (R-NJ)**

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In June 1999, Rep. Ed Markey (D-MA) and Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ) joined together as co-chairs of the Bipartisan Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease. As of May 1, 2001 150 Members have joined the Task Force with the mission of improving the lives of those affected by Alzheimer's through increased funding for research and increased support to Alzheimer's patients and their caregivers.

In the 106th Congress the Alzheimer's Task Force was successful in accomplishing three significant goals:

- increasing the NIH budget for Alzheimer's research by \$85 million
- bringing total federal funding for Alzheimer's research to \$520 million
- clarifying the "Homebound" definition in Medicare law to allow for Alzheimer's patients to attend adult day care and religious services without fear of losing their home health benefit passage of the Alzheimer's Clinical Awards and Training Program to promote Alzheimer's clinical research

**Background on Alzheimer's Disease:**

Alzheimer's Disease is a progressive brain disorder marked by an irreversible decline in intellectual abilities and by changes in behavior and personality. The disease can span between three and twenty years and ultimately leaves patients incapable of caring for themselves. As a result, Alzheimer's Disease has a profound effect on the millions of family members and other loved ones who provide most of the care for people with the disease. Approximately 19 million people have a family member who suffers from dementia.

**Alzheimer's Cost Burden - Human and Financial:**

- 4 million Americans have Alzheimer's Disease today; 14 million will have it by 2050. One in 10 people over 65 and nearly half of those over 85 have Alzheimer's.
- The total cost of Alzheimer care today is already \$100 billion. Families pay most of that cost themselves.
- Even though Medicare does not cover what people with Alzheimer's most need (i.e. long term care and prescription drugs), we are spending 70% more on beneficiaries who have dementia than on those who are not cognitively impaired.
- Medicaid is the long term care payer of last resort - after families have exhausted their own resources - and now pays over 50% of the nation's nursing home bill.
- Families are the invisible long term care system providing \$196 billion worth of unpaid care every year. At least one-third of that is for loved ones with Alzheimer's.
- The annual cost of Alzheimer's Disease to American business is \$33 billion mostly in the loss of productivity of employees who are caregivers.